Subject: [EXTERNAL] Background Press Call by Senior Administration Officials on the G7 Summit

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**From:** White House Press Office **To:** Farivar, Cyrus (NBCUniversal)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BACKGROUND PRESS CALL BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS
ON THE G7 SUMMIT

Via Teleconference

August 22, 2019

2:01 P.M. EDT

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Hey. Good afternoon everybody, and thanks for joining the call. We have a number of senior administration officials here to brief you today.

I just want to go over the ground rules. First, this is provided on background, so attribution would be to "senior administration officials." The contents are embargoed until the end of the call so please observe that. And as each speaker comes on the line, they'll identify themselves and their title just for simplicity.

Okay. So, with that, we'll turn to our first speaker. [Senior administration official], please take it away.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure. Thank you so much, [senior administration official]. And I guess it's morning or good afternoon there, everyone. I am now in Biarritz, France. I'm the [redacted].

So what I wanted to do is start by outlining the schedule of events and various sessions that are taking place over the next

few days. And then I will go through and highlight some of the key themes that the President is going to be talking about and pushing out while he is here over the weekend.

So I will start with the first event, which is Saturday night. France has organized an informal dinner of G7 leaders, and it's just the leaders. They'll have a chance to talk about important issues related to foreign policy and security affairs.

The next event will be a session on Sunday morning where they will be talking about global economy and following up on any foreign policy and security affairs issues. And this is a session that was added at the last minute at the request of the United States to talk about issues related to the global economy.

After that, there will be a session called, "Fighting Against Inequalities," which covers issues related to gender inequality and other -- with respect to access to opportunities in the marketplace. It will be a working lunch with the G7 economies, plus a number of international organizations.

In the afternoon, there will be another session on G7 and the Africa partnership where France has invited a number of countries -- Senegal, Egypt, Burkina Faso, South Africa, and Rwanda -- to participate and join the G7 countries to talk about issues that are of importance to the continent.

After that, there will be a family photo and an informal dinner among all of the invited economies, as well as the international organizations.

Monday, August 26th, will be the last day. The first session there is on climate biodiversity and oceans, followed by another session -- a working lunch -- on digital transformation. And then a closing session of just the G7 economies, followed by a press conference.

So that's the run of show. And in terms of what you can expect from us -- I highlighted it right at the beginning of my remarks on the schedule -- the G7 is a forum that was really created to address the international shock to the economy that happened during the oil crisis. And then, from there, it served

as an effective forum to address various financial crises and to look at issues related to global growth, the currency stability, and the like. And it's really begun to grow over the past few decades to address issues related to foreign policy and a host of other issues.

But really, the core of the G7 is about global growth and how the world's most advanced and industrialized nations can get together and tackle common challenges and problems -- really deliver a message about where they see the state of the economy going.

So in this first session, you will really hear the President hit home the message of the pro-jobs, pro-growth economic agenda and what he's done by way of the historic tax reform, deregulation, investment policies, a focus on energy, and free, fair, and reciprocal trade. These are critical agenda items that the President has done domestically. We've seen the results. We've seen hundreds of thousands of jobs coming back to the U.S. economy. And we've seen growth rates that we didn't think were possible just a few years ago.

And you can contrast this to what's happening in Europe, where growth is effectively flat. And you'll have the President really engaging in honest conversations with European allies and colleagues about what we can do, not only to grow growth at home, but also to open up European and Japanese and Canadian markets as well to ensure that U.S. workers and businesses have markets in which they can sell their goods and services, and that, as we grow, we are taking our allies with us.

So in addition to growth and trade, he will also be talking about things like multilateral reform. The President has really been the key driver of highlighting the need for the WTO to come into the 21st century, both in terms of members living up to their commitments — in terms of really taking on the full commitment of the agreements, as developed countries — as well as tackling new rules and really taking a hard look at whether the institution is equipped to address the challenges of non-market economies and the new digital economy.

There will also be significant emphasis on what these economies -- the G7 economies can do to really write the rules for this

century, in contrast to the unfair trade practices that we see coming out of China, the industrial subsidies, state-directed economic activity, forced tech transfer, IP theft, and all of the things that President Trump has really been a (inaudible) leader in trying to address, not just for America, but for the rest of the modern world.

In addition to the economy broadly, the President will also be driving home a message of promoting economic opportunities for women all over the world. I mean, this is a huge priority for this administration. You've seen it in the launch of W-GDP, our commitment as a founding member to We-Fi, through 2X Africa -- a number of initiatives. And that's because we're leaving \$12 trillion on the table, in terms of global economic growth, by not allowing women, in equal opportunity, to participate in the global marketplace.

As the President has said many times, societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and more peaceful. And that's a method that we really want to drive home this weekend in France.

So in addition to women's economic empowerment, there is a huge emphasis on what we can do in Africa. And that is in part highlighted by President Macron's decision to invite five African economies to join with the G7 countries and have an honest conversation about issues related to anti-corruption; to peace, stability, and security in the Sahel region; as well as development, finance, and infrastructure.

We've got a lot of positive messages there. We recently passed the BUILD Act. We are continuing to pour in significant aid to the region, as well as \$5 billion in capacity to the Sahel countries to provide security and essential services.

We are proud of everything that we're doing there, from our joint forces, to providing for education, and really helping the people of the region to coordinate amongst themselves and to help facilitate their own prosperity and economic growth.

So in addition to those issues, certainly challenges related to the digital economy and innovation will be on the table. We have

one of the most innovative economies in the world. President Trump's pro-jobs, pro-growth agenda has unleashed entrepreneurship. We provide opportunities for our tech companies -- not overregulation, over-taxation.

I know for a fact that the President will also be raising the digital services tax here in France, which has become quite a point of the interest in conversation between himself and President Macron.

The United States -- we're fully committed to the OECD process, and it is very disappointing that countries like France are seeking to undermine the ability of those negotiations to succeed by adopting their unilateral taxation measures really at the expense of U.S. companies, insofar as some of the rhetoric surrounding them has specifically been targeted at our companies.

President Trump certainly wants to see a global solution to that issue, which he'll keep pushing, but he is also not going to back down in the face of countries like France going after our industry.

Another issue that I think you'll hear him talk a lot about is the environment. It is one where we have one of the best records on Earth when it comes to biodiversity, clean air, water, and even on climate and carbon emission. You know, our carbon emissions have dropped 14 percent since 2005. At the same time, our economy has grown nearly 20 percent. We have a winning record on the environment, but we don't think that environmental protection needs to necessarily cost economic growth or energy security and dominance. And we have a proven track record across all of those.

So we have a lot of great messages to put out there. There will be a lot of very interesting conversations to be had among the leaders, both in the sessions themselves and at the margin.

And with that, I'll turn it back over to my colleague to talk about some of the bilateral meetings that are planned.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thanks. So, while the President is attending the G7 Summit, we anticipate that he will

conduct a number of meetings with world leaders. And that list, which is not completely fleshed out, will include meetings with Prime Minister Johnson of the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Macron of France, Prime Minister Abe of Japan, Prime Minister Modi of India, Chancellor Merkel of Germany, and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada.

And, with that, I'll pass the baton over to my colleague to talk about the European bilats.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Good afternoon, everyone. Just a few words on the European bilats. In each of these meetings, the President is going to be emphasizing the overall messages that my colleague has described, and his agenda of improving world trade and prosperity. Those will be particular points of emphasis.

With Prime Minister Johnson, I would note that this will be the first face-to-face meeting that he has had with the President since becoming Prime Minister. And the priority will be on discussing the ongoing, very close partnership that the U.S. and United Kingdom enjoy, and on ways that we are going to take that forward and enhance it in the future.

In particular, as might be guessed, there will be discussion of the upcoming exit of the UK from the European Union -- what that will mean, how we will work together to manage that process as effectively as possible while enhancing our bilateral relationship. And in particular, we will be talking about the possibility of a free trade agreement or free trade agreements to be negotiated between our two countries. We -- we're very enthusiastic about that prospect; the President is. And we would like to be able to make some progress.

In the meeting with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, they will be following on previous discussions that they've had with great frequency, covering a wide-range of issues. In particular, they are going to be talking about trade and the importance of removing European barriers through trade in the agriculture and other sectors.

The President will raise, as my colleague mentioned, the highly discriminatory digital services tax that France has decided upon. This is a barrier to achieving progress in a global regime on digital services and it's highly counterproductive at this time.

They will also be discussing regional security issues, particularly in the Middle East and in North Africa and the possibilities for a partnership to make the situations in those places better.

With German Chancellor Merkel, again, trade will be a very important element of that discussion. They will also be covering energy security and the importance of diminishing European reliance on Russian gas sources. And they will be discussing European security and the importance of all countries who meet NATO's 2 percent of GDP defense spending goal.

So, that's it for the Europeans.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay. Now I'd like to turn to my colleague to discuss the Indian -- meeting with Prime Minister Modi.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Hi, this is [senior administration official]. President Trump is very much looking forward to his meeting with Indian Prime Minister Modi, where they will discuss the strategic partnership and how they can cooperate more closely on issues like defense cooperation, counterterrorism, and trade.

We expect the two leaders to build on the very productive discussions they had in Osaka at the G20, as well as the phone call that they held earlier this week. They will look for solutions on the trade front. The U.S. is looking to India to reduce tariffs and open its markets.

We do expect the issue of India-Pakistan relations to come up. The President will likely want to hear from Prime Minister Modi on how he plans to reduce regional tensions and uphold respect for human rights for Kashmir, as part of India's role as the world's largest democracy.

India's decision to rescind Article 370 in Kashmir is an internal decision, but certainly with regional implications. And President Trump will likely want to hear how Prime Minister Modi intends to calm regional tensions in light of this significant move.

The President is likely to stress the need for dialogue among all sides of the conflict and his hope that India would lift the communications and movement restrictions in Kashmir and exercise the utmost restraint in dealing with potential protests. And certainly, President Trump is also calling on Pakistan to prevent the infiltration of militants across the line of control that divides Kashmir and to crack down on groups on its territory that have attacked India in the past.

That's all I have to say and I look forward to any potential questions.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'll be talking about the President's meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada. This will be the President's meeting with the Prime Minister shortly before Trudeau's campaign -- the Canadian campaign -- formally begins that will be set formally to begin at some point no later than September 15th, with an election in Canada on October 21st.

It goes without saying the United States and Canada are very close friends and partners. In fact, today, Secretary Pompeo is in Ottawa meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau and Foreign Minister Freeland. The President hosted the Prime Minister at the White House on June 20th and the two leaders spoke by phone just last week.

During their bilateral meeting on the margins of the G7, they'll discuss a wide range of issues, to include trade -- in particular, their shared support for the historic United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. They will discuss ways to increase pressure on Maduro in Venezuela. And they will also discuss the political situation in Hong Kong, where 300,000 Canadian citizens reside.

So, any questions, I'm happy to answer. Thank you.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And back to [senior administration official] to discuss the bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Abe and to wrap up.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure. Well, I think my colleagues did a great job covering the rest of the President's schedule. And he certainly will be meeting with Prime Minister Abe, who he has a great relationship with. The two have met frequently over the past few years and discussed a number of important issues related to China and North Korea.

I think trade is certainly on both of their minds right now and ways that we can work together to open up markets for U.S. workers and farmers. And we'll see where they get to, but I know they have a lot in common, a lot of shared priorities, and it will be a really terrific meeting.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay, thanks. So we'd -- we're open to questions on the G7 now, moderator, if you could queue everyone up.

Q Hi. This is Andrew Feinberg with Breakfast Media. Thanks for doing this. On the G7 itself, the sessions, I had two questions. First, regarding the Monday session on climate: Does the President still believe that the concept of global warming is created by and for the Chinese to make U.S. manufacturing noncompetitive?

And my second question is, will any of the President's family members be participating in any of the G7 sessions this year?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure. I guess that's for me. You know, the President is very proud to talk about our strong record on the environment. And as I highlighted at the top, we have one of the best records in the world, including on the issues related to climate. And I think the G7 provides another opportunity for all of our economies to come together and talk about that shared priority and ways that we can continue to move forward.

But again, environmental protection -- we have a clear record -- doesn't need to come at the expense of global growth and energy

stability. And I think that we have a balanced approach that works and the President is going to be really engaged with his colleagues in talking about all of that.

With respect to questions about the delegation, I don't have information on that at this time.

Thank you.

Q Hi, this is Shirish Date at the HuffPost. I was curious about a couple of things that have happened in the past few weeks. The President claimed that he'd spoken with Prime Minister Modi and the Prime Minister had asked him to get involved in the Kashmir dispute. It came almost immediately afterwards, the Indian foreign minister put out a statement: Well, no, that had actually never happened.

The other day we had a report that the President had spoken with French President Macron. And that Macron had said, "Yeah, we should invite the Russians back into the G8." And then, the French said, no, that actually never happened either. What is going on? And how damaging is this to the President and the country's credibility? Thank you.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes. I can take the question -- the first part of the question on Prime Minister Modi.

So the United States is watching the situation in Kashmir very closely. We're continuing to call for calm and restraint, including on rhetoric. But we note the broader implications of the developments in Jammu and Kashmir, and the potential for increased stability in the region. So the President is very focused on this situation, these issues. And what he has indicated -- that he is ready to assist if both sides are interested in helping to reduce their tensions.

But we just note that India has not requested any formal mediation. But the President has said, you know, he's friends with both leaders -- both Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan and Prime Minister Modi of India. And he stands ready to assist if they both would like him to do so.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: With regard to Russia, Russia was suspended from what was then the G8 for reasons that are well known. There has been discussion, I believe, coming from the French to about when it would be time for Russia to rejoin, if ever.

So that may very well come up, but the key factor here is that the Russians themselves have not asked to rejoin. So I would expect that should happen first.

Q Thanks a lot for doing the call. This is Dmitry Kirsanov with TASS. As a follow-up to that, I just wanted to ask what exactly President Trump is going to convey to his G7 counterparts when it comes to Russia? Is he suggesting that Russia should be brought back into G7 fold, so to say? And what kind of discussion do you expect in France when it comes to the relations with Russia? Thanks.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the President did speak to this issue this week already. I mean, he said that, you know, it would be a good thing if the Russians were there, given the fact that the G7 spends a significant amount of time talking about security and economic issues. But he's not necessarily opining one way or the other, and we don't really have anything further to add at this time. Thank you.

Q Hi, this is Scott Waldman with E&E News. Will President Trump sign on to the climate agreement with other G7 leaders, since that's been an issue in the past? And, if not, what science is he relying upon to reject the notion that climate change poses an existential threat to humans and requires international intervention to address?

Also, it's worth noting that greenhouse gas emissions have risen under the Trump administration last year, so I'm wondering if there's any plans in place to reduce those.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure. This is [senior administration official] again. I guess I'm not sure what climate agreement you're referring to. I mean, President Macron has made clear that he is not issuing a joint communiqué for leaders for

this G7 summit.

I did identify a number of topics that we anticipate leaders will be discussing, and certainly, the environment, oceans, and climate are one of them. And again, our carbon emissions have dropped. We have a really strong record in this space and President Trump is looking forward to discussing this message, along with economic growth and energy dominance and stability and security, with his colleagues. Thank you.

Q Hi. This is Anne Gearan with the Washington Post. I guess this will probably go to [senior administration official], but I'm interested in that first session you mentioned for Saturday morning — the one that came at the request at the United States. Can you give us a little bit more on the agenda and say whether this is related to any U.S. concerns about weakness in its own economy? Thank you.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure. Thanks for the question. Yeah, the reason this came at the request of the United States is because we think that the global economy really is one of the core features of the G7 and really should stay the focus.

So I would imagine issues related to global growth -- pro-job, pro-growth policies; tax reform; deregulation; investment policies; currency stability; certainly trade and many of the barriers and their practices that we're seeing coming out of China and we're collectively facing -- will be on the agenda as well. And certainly WTO reform and the need to have to have institutions that can keep up with a modern economy.

But I would anticipate President Trump will be speaking quite frankly about the policies he's seen work in his own economy and really wanting to work with other countries in the G7 to figure out how we can jumpstart growth in economies all around to ensure that there are markets and opportunities for all of our workers and people.

Q Yes. Hi. This is Francesca Chambers with DailyMail.com. Just had a couple follow-up questions. I haven't heard anything yet about the President and his wanting to, I guess, make a deal with Europe to send the ISIS fighters that the

United States has in custody back. He's brought that up several times this week, so I wanted to know whether that will be at the forefront of his agenda.

And as it pertains to Russia -- I'm sorry, there were multiple people who brought this up at this point -- someone just said that he wasn't necessarily opining one way or the other to bring Russia back into the fold, however he's also brought that up a couple times. So when he said somebody should bring it up and there should potentially be a vote, is he going to call for that vote?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: My understanding is the G7 works by consensus, so there would be no question of a vote.

I think what we did say is that we expect the issue of Russia's participation or nonparticipation to be discussed among the leaders.

Q Hi this is Shannon Pettypiece with NBC. I wanted to see if I could get some -- a bit more specifics from you on trade, as far as what the President is hoping for outcomes.

On Germany and France, what specifically is he going to be asking those countries to do? I know you mentioned the tax in France. But in Germany, what is he -- what is his ask of Merkel? And will he be reiterating his threat of tariffs if those countries don't take the actions that he's seeking?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So, I can speak to it in terms of the sessions themselves and the opportunities for leaders to speak collectively about the challenges they're facing. I mean, that's the great advantage of the G7 is that there are challenges that are collectively shared by the world's most advanced and industrialized economies, and they can really dig in and come up with creative solutions as to how they're going to address these challenges.

So, of course the big ones that you see right now are those related to the unfair trading practices like (inaudible), forced technology transfer, as well as an increasingly digitalized economy that, while it provides significant opportunities, also

provides some significant challenges that really need to be addressed collectively.

And then, of course, the challenges related to the multilateral system -- it's inability to cope with actors like China coming onto the scene, as well as new types of economic behavior and the fact that our economy is (inaudible) moving at rapid speed.

So those are the types of conversations that I would expect the President to be having with his colleagues in those sessions -- is how do we collectively tackle the challenges.

Q Yes, hi, this Adam Behsudi with Politico. I had a question about the bilateral with Prime Minister Abe. Are they expected, at that point, to be close to possibly agreeing to this trade deal they've been negotiating? Or is there still too much negotiating still to do on that issue? Is there going to be some sort of turning point in those talks when he meets with the Prime Minister?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure, well, I certainly don't want to get out ahead of the President or of Ambassador Lighthizer, who is engaging with his counterpart, Motegi, on the trade issues.

You know, we've had a strong interest in a trade deal with Japan for quite some time. We notified our intent to negotiate with Congress many, many months ago. We're looking at a number of issues and sectors, and there have been a series of meetings that have happened with Ambassador Lighthizer and his counterpart and the various teams.

So we're working our way through. We certainly have a lot of shared priorities and a lot of similar goals and ambitions. So it certainly (inaudible) partner and ally that Ambassador Lighthizer is prioritizing (inaudible) our farmers and -- but also looking at a series of other issues.

So we'll see. The devil is in the details and you don't have a deal until you have a deal (inaudible) rather than later. But I can't speak necessarily to the time.

Q Hello, this is Kylie Sertic with Kyodo News. I also have a question on the bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Abe. Will they be discussing South Korea's decision not to renew the General Security of Military Information Agreements, or GSOMIA, at their meeting?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think they'll be discussing a range of issues between the two leaders, from economic issues to security issues and regional issues. And I don't want to, again, get out ahead of the President and Prime Minister Abe as to what they may or may not be discussing, but I would imagine it would cover a host of concerns.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay, thanks everybody for joining today. We appreciate you dialing in. Again, as a reminder, this information is provided on background and attribution is to a "senior administration official." And now that the call is ended, the embargo on the contents are lifted.

Thanks again.

END

2:35 P.M. EDT

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